MASTER AND SERVANT

A LITTLE native girl, thinly clad, cold and apparently half-starved, knocked at the door of the Rev. William Burnet Wright's house one morning.

"Is this Minister Wright's house?" asked the waif when he answered.

"Yes," replied the clergyman. "Yes, it is."

"Are you Minister Wright?"

"Yes."

"Take me."

Mr. Wright explains in his book, Cities of Paul, that the child had probably been taught in some mission school that Jesus was the friend of little children, and in her artless simplicity had drawn the natural inference that Christ's ministers would share the kindly feelings of the Master they serve, and be as willing to help a little one in need as He who, of old, took such in his loving arms and blessed them.

It is to be feared that the shivering waif would not go far among well-meaning Christian people in our own land without learning that her simple faith had presumed too much. Not that compassion and practical helpfulness do not play a large part in the hearts and lives of many followers of Christ, but, rather, that it comes to us with something like a shock of surprise that the obligations of our discipleship should be taken literally and thrust bluntly upon us.

Yet who can doubt for a moment that the Master would have stood behind the little girl's trustful "Take me" at the door of any Christian home? "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me," is too positive and incisive to leave room for cautious reserves or cunningly devised subterfuges. Jesus did not inquire into the antecedents of the thousands He healed and helped. It was the present need that appealed to his great heart of love, and it never appealed in vain.

There is a dangerous tendency in our day to soften down, or reason away, the radical requirements that the gospel imposes upon all who would be true disciples of Christ. Under one pretext or another, we minimize intrinsic holiness of life, the frank and full forgiveness of injuries, unselfish and impartial love to our brother man, sacrificial generosity, until they become mere shadows of what they were on the lips and in the life of Jesus. Is there any good ground for believing that, were Jesus to appear to-day in our midst, He would truckle to what we complacently call the "exigencies of our modern life," either in his teaching or in his living?

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